

Leicester, Mass. Dec. 29. 1863.

Dear Mr. Webb;

And first a Merry Christmas to you all and a Happy New Year. And next I pray you to pardon my delay - most undesigned - in acknowledging your favours, and among them the Spectators - a very admirable paper & conducted with ability & in a large, wise, & generous spirit. I read what I can of it, & then (as you request) pass them over to E. Quincy. He sees heaps of English papers, magazines, & reviews, at the Boston Athenaeum & Public Library; and (between us) I think I could make a better use of any Spectator you may please to send me in the future than in sending them to him. He usually writes his Standard editorials, and any other matter of the sort he is preparing, at the Athenaeum, or at my desk, at the A.S. Office, when fresh from the Athenaeum, where he sees the latest that journalism can give him, whether home or abroad. I know of persons scattered about, who would be helped & interested by seeing occasional Nos. of the Spectator. Of course ~~I~~ I would not keep a single paper from Quincy, which I thought he needed to see; but I feel quite sure it is a work of supererogation to give them to him - or a carrying of coals to Newcastle. Still I shall not divert them from your purpose, without your consent. Sometimes a paper has come without the "E. Q." on it. Then I have availed myself of the strict construction policy, & done what I pleased with it. - I hope you occasionally receive Evening Posts which I send you. - You may be sure we were all much surprised (a number of weeks ago) at receiving a note from your son Richard in New York, (enclosing one also from you,) and informing us that he was

on his way to California, & perhaps British Columbia.
He said he was to sail fr^m. N. York the following Monday. The
letter was addressed to Boston, but I had left on its arriving, & it
followed me to Leicester, where I rec^d. it only Sat. evng. We
all felt disappointed - first, not to see him, and very sorry
indeed that he should hurry on so, & not stop for a look or a
word with us, and second, that the delay in receiving his letter
hardly allowed us time to acknowledge it, & give him our greetings
& farewells & good wishes, before he would get away. The ordinary
course of mails from here to N. Yk. (no mail leaving this town on
Sunday) would certainly not avail to take a letter to him; but I
wrote him the best letter I could in the circumstances on Sunday
morning, and, having (by a fortunate coincidence) a call to go to
Worcester that evening to meet a friend coming from Boston by the
Sunday ~~night~~ mail train to New York, I took the letter to Worcester,
& handed it to one of the men employed upon the train whom I happened
to know, & he told me he would do his best (though it had to go through
a third hand, as he didn't go all the way to N. Y. himself) to have
it early dropped in N. Y. Postoffice. If so, R. would stand a good
chance of getting it, as the California ships do not leave, I think, until
noon, or after. And I am encouraged to think he did get it, because
on the ~~letter~~ letter I desired Mr. P. Powell (at whose house Rich^d. was
staying, & to which the letter was addressed) to return it to me, if it arrived
late; and it has never come back. I have been thus particular
in telling you all this, that you & he might know there was no
neglect ^{or delay} on my part, in regard to his letter. When you are writing to
him, I should be glad to have you just say that I ans^w. his kind
letter immediately on receiving it, & that our best wishes go with him
to the ends of the earth whither his steps have been turned.

It has been a busy autumn & winter with me thus far,
and is sure to continue so until the middle of February at
least. Not that I have as much to do as formerly - perhaps
a quarter or a third less - but then I am not half as well able
to work as I used to be. I cannot continue many hours on a
stretch at any work, without being put back by it, & losing time.

If I am careful in all respects, I get along passably well - and in this respect seem to be doing better than a year ago, or six months ago. From June to October, I was in a pretty poor plight, most of the time, and was getting discouraged. Since that I am better. But I keep, (I am sorry to say,) behind my work all the time; and this is the reason why I have not written to you sooner. It is also the reason why I have not, long ago, written to those dear and honoured and (they will allow me to say it) beloved ladies, Mary Estlin & Eliza Wigham. Much I owe them both, in many ways. In letters, for instance, I am their debtor, and this debt I hope sometime to pay. Their friendship, their support, their kind remembrance, their faithfulness & truth, have been of a value to me that is not so easily repaid. I would like to have you send them both, in turn, this poor note, that they may see that I am, at least, not unmindful or ungrateful. Particularly now I thank Miss Wigham for her very neat little volume, which I duly received, just before starting to attend the Thirtieth Anniversary (3^d Decade) of the American Antislavery Society at Philadelphia. I took it along with me, reading it in cars as I went, and in order to show it to friends there, - and had an excellent oppⁿ. to do so one evening, when a large number of "select, precious" men & women were assembled (Saturday Evng. Dec. 5.) at Miller M^r. Kim's house. Garrison also had received a copy. There has been a slight notice of it in Liberator. I have been prevented from making a fuller notice of it, by the misfortune of having left my copy, ~~with some~~ - and a cloth travelling-cap also, - at M^r. Kim's house! I wrote back at once for them, but they have not got to me yet. We left at last in ~~some~~ ^{some} haste, - yet that is no excuse. I knew when we were to leave, & should have collected everything. But up to the last minute we were continually occupied, and that assemblage was enough to account for almost any forgetfulness of common habits & duties. I feel honoured by Miss W.'s kind attention, and shall always prize her book. Bye & bye I shall answer her note, which came with it. The book is safe, & on the way to me, as Mr. M^r. Kim has written to us

I would have given much to have had you at our
Decade Meeting. Your presence would have added a most
valuable & acceptable element to the meeting, and I am sure you
would have enjoyed it. It was characteristic, in its spirit, in its
variety, in its essential unity & harmony, in its freedom, in its
singleness of purpose, in its simplicity, in its straightforwardness,
in all respects characteristic of the entire Antislavery Movement,
and of the Thirty Years' warfare of which it was the culmination.
You will be receiving the reports of it, in Standard & Liberator, at
these times; the report is fair, but not so good as Yerrinton would
have given. Nor could any report do justice to that meeting.
It must be seen & heard, to be felt in its force & true meaning.
In that great & beautiful hall, in the very heart of Philadelphia
from which the Ladies of the Antislavery Fair only a few years since
were driven by a mob, we sat for 3 days & evenings, (the 3^d day being the
Annual Meeting of the Penn^a. Antislavery Society,) not in quiet
only, but with multiplied proofs of the hearty moral support now given
to the doctrines & principles of our Society by the highest & best minds in
Philadelphia. There sat a delegation of Colored Troops from "Camp
William Penn". There sat their Colonel. There sat the Commandant
of that Post, & spoke too, ably & nobly. There came, and also spoke, the
United States District Attorney, "congratulating himself on speaking in the
presence of so distinguished a citizen & philanthropist as Wm Lloyd Garrison."
There was Henry Ward Beecher, & Wm H. Furness, & Lucretia Mott, and Lucy
Stone; there were the quiet, but firm & undaunted, Quakers on all
sides of us. There was Thomas Garrett of Delaware, whose life is
crowned with the record of over 2300 slaves sheltered & helped to freedom.
There was Levi Coffin of Ohio, who had given like aid & comfort to more
than 3300 slaves. - But I have no room, nor time, to add more.
I hope soon to write you again.

One thing - please do not send me any money, for the paper, until
you get my account of what I am owing you, - that you may
deduct it. You shall have it soon.

Our Antislavery Ladies have decided to hold the regular
Subscription Anniversary in January. It will take place on
Wednesday evening Jan. 21st. - Thank you for the photograph
note by Richard.

With sincere & affectionate regards

Your friend Samuel May